

**Version with Markings to Show Changes Made**

5. (Amended) The method of allowing bypass of a ring signal in a voice messaging system according to claim 4, wherein said answering comprises:

[substantially immediately] playing an outgoing greeting message to a caller associated with said incoming call without requiring reception of any ring signal relating to said incoming call; and

allowing said caller to record a voice message.

6. (Amended) The method of allowing bypass of a ring signal in a voice messaging system according to claim 4, wherein said answering comprises:

[substantially immediately] allowing a caller associated with said incoming call to record a voice message without requiring reception of any ring signal relating to said incoming call.

9. (Amended) The apparatus for allowing bypass of a ring signal in a voice messaging system according to claim 8, wherein said means for answering comprises:

means for [substantially immediately] playing an outgoing greeting message to a caller associated with said incoming call without requiring reception of any ring signal relating to said incoming call; and

means for allowing said caller to record a voice message.

10. (Amended) The apparatus for allowing bypass of a ring signal in a voice messaging system according to claim 8, wherein said means for answering comprises:

means for [substantially immediately] allowing a caller associated with said incoming call to record a voice message without requiring reception of any ring signal relating to said incoming call.

13. (Amended) The method of allowing a calling party to bypass a ring signal in a voice messaging system of a called party according to claim 12, further comprising:

[substantially immediately] allowing said calling party to record a voice message in said voice message memory before reception of any ring signal.

**REMARKS**

Claims 1-15 remain pending in this application, claims 16-21 being cancelled herein.

**Declaration Typographical Error**

In the Office Action, the declaration was objected to for containing a minor typographical error on page 1, line 7. In particular, the Examiner objects to the inclusion of “an” instead of the intended “am”.

It is respectfully submitted that this typographical error is not sufficient to render the Declaration defective in any way whatsoever. The intended word is clear from the document, as evidenced by the Examiner's correct understanding of the intended word “am”.

There is no defect in the Declaration. Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that the Examiner's objection to the same be withdrawn.

**Section 112, Second Paragraph**

Claims 1-16 were rejected under 35 USC 112, second paragraph, as allegedly being indefinite. Claim 16 is cancelled herein, mooted the rejection in that regard.

Claims 1-15 have been carefully reviewed, and are amended appropriately herein, to be more definite.

With respect to claim 1, the Examiner alleges that the language “before reception of an initial ring signal” is “vague and indefinite because it is unclear if an initial ring is sent.” The Applicants respectfully note that a ring signal is not sent by the recited voice messaging system, so the alleged indefiniteness is a red herring.

Claim 1 claims a voice messaging system (not a central office), and does not send a ring signal. Functions at the central office (such as whether or not the initial ring is sent) are not recited by claim 1, but rather functions responsive to signals received or not received are. Presumably, according to claim 1, no initial ring signal will have been sent by the central office when the

ring signal bypass module places the telephone line in an off-hook condition. Claim 1 is clear as written.

Claims 1-15 are now in full conformance with 35 USC 112. It is therefore respectfully requested that the rejection be withdrawn.

**Claims 1-21 in View of Borland**

Claims 1-21 were rejected under 35 USC 102(e) as allegedly being anticipated by U.S. Pat. No. 6,128,382 to Borland et al. ("Borland"). Claims 16-21 are cancelled herein, mooted the rejection in that regard. With respect to claims 1-15, the Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

Claims 1-7 recite a ring signal bypass module that causes a telephone line interface to place a telephone line in an off-hook condition before reception of an initial ring signal relating to the incoming call. Claims 8-11 recite means for answering an incoming call by a voice messaging system before a reception of any ring signal. Claims 12-15 recite a method including bypassing all ring signals to a voice messaging system by answering a call from a calling party before a reception of any ring signal.

Borland discloses a voice messaging system which utilizes a local ring/message option logic unit 200, which receives a ring signal and answers the call without passing the ring signal on to a ringer. (Borland, col. 5, lines 35-40). Borland clearly teaches the reception of an incoming ring signal before any functionality becomes operational. (See, e.g., Borland, col. 5, lines 1-3)

In contrast, the present invention utilizes a non-ring signal from a central office, e.g., a "DirectAnswer" service. (See, e.g., specification, page 5, line 29 to page 6, line 11). The non-ring signal may be, e.g., a line reversal. Upon receipt of a non-ring signal, the answering machine is taken off-hook before receipt of any ring signal.

The use of a non-ring signal results in particular advantages over prior art systems, e.g., it reduces complication in the circuitry and/or software programming of the voice messaging system.

Borland fails to disclose a ring signal bypass module that causes a telephone line interface to place a telephone line in an off-hook condition before

reception of an initial ring signal relating to the incoming call as claimed by claims 1-11, or a method including bypassing all ring signals to a voice messaging system by answering a call from a calling party before a reception of any ring signal, as claimed by claims 12-15.

Moreover, claims 1-7 recite a ring signal bypass module adapted to detect a presence of a non-ring signal indicating a presence of an incoming call,

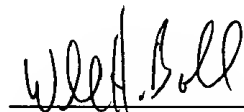
Borland fails to disclose the use of a non-ring signal whatsoever, as claimed by claims 1-7.

For at least all the above reasons, claims 1-15 are patentable over the prior art of record. It is therefore respectfully requested that the rejection be withdrawn.

#### **Conclusion**

All objections and rejections having been addressed, it is respectfully submitted that the subject application is in condition for allowance and a Notice to that effect is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,



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